

NEWSLETTER

Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas, Chair, Democratic Caucus

Honoring the Memory of Mrs. Rosa Parks

"Rosa Parks had an independent spirit that allowed her to proceed in a direction and take an action that she knew was right. She had a determination to protect herself and her place in the world, even in the face of society's customs and laws that denigrated her standing as a woman and an African American. Rosa Parks would not be denied her rightful seat at the front of the bus nor surrender her seat at the demand of another passenger named Jim Crow or his army of surrogates.



She stayed still in her seat as a protest against injustice with dignity and determination and helped set in motion the modern civil rights movement in America. The world owes her a profound debt of gratitude.

On a smaller, yet very significant level, for the women in South Los Angeles who find themselves in circumstances of personal peril at the hands of

Mark and Avis Ridley-Thomas share a moment with Rosa Parks in 1985 at the opening of the Rosa Parks Sexual Assault Crisis Center in South Los Angeles.

others, there is a place where they can go when they have the determination to protect themselves and preserve their standing as women who will not be denied their right to a safe place in their world. That place is fittingly named the Rosa Parks Rape Crisis Center. I am honored today, as much as I was excited then, that Mrs. Parks dedicated that center for us in 1984. Since that time hundreds of women have been accompanied to hospitals, police stations, and courts and provided ongoing counseling and support. They, like Rosa Parks, are survivors." ■

Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas Praises the Selection of Blair H. Taylor to Head the Los Angeles Urban League

Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas joined with civic leaders in applauding the appointment of Blair H. Taylor as the new President and Chief Executive Officer of the Los Angeles Urban League and successor to the esteemed John W. Mack.

"The Board of the Los Angeles Urban League is to be commended for its selection of Blair Taylor as its new President and CEO. Blair Taylor has the vision for this work and commitment to community advancement. He will bring crucial insight to the position at this important time for our community. I predict that he will be the top tier of a new generation of leadership in Los Angeles.

Blair served as a senior member of my staff when I was Los Angeles City Councilman for the 8th District. His knowledge of public safety and economic development issues will serve him well in his new role. I believe he



New Urban League President Blair Taylor (center) is joined by (from l to r) Robert Taylor, James Castillo, Senior VP Operations, Los Angeles Urban League, Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas, John Mack, LAPD Police Commission President, Greg King and Geraldine Washington, President of the Los Angeles Branch of the NAACP.

can lead the Urban League in addressing the interests and concerns of the men, women and children of all ethnic groups in our community. His record as a coalition builder and his association with progressive causes should

serve the League well.

I wish Blair Taylor well as he assumes his new position and I look forward to working with him and the other leaders of the Los Angeles Urban League." ■

Ridley-Thomas Opens Prop. 63 Commissioners' Eyes With Night Tour of Skid Row, A.M. Housing Tour



Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas talks with Carol Schatz, President & CEO of the Central City Association of Los Angeles during a break on the Proposition 63 Commissioner's tour of housing options for the homeless mentally ill in front of A Community of Friends, 39 West Apartments.

Tours educate commissioners about housing options, and offer "reality check" regarding homeless and mentally ill populations in Los Angeles

On the night of October 25, 2005, the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) toured Los Angeles' Skid Row, hosted by Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas (D-Los Angeles). The tour's main objective was to bring awareness to and educate the Commissioners about the severity of issues linked to the homeless mentally ill population within Los Angeles' Central City East neighborhood.

"Under the cover of darkness, we had a chance to gain firsthand knowledge of Skid Row in the early evening, at a time when the look and feel of the area changes and the dimension of homelessness and mental illness looms large," said Ridley-Thomas. "Tomorrow, in the light of day, we'll see another side of this challenge when we observe responses pursuing different housing models."

The Commission was created under Proposition 63, known as the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), which authorized a 1 percent tax on income over \$1 million to pay for expanded health services for mentally ill children, adults, and seniors.

As one of sixteen members on the Commission, Assemblymember Ridley-Thomas is charged with overseeing the disbursement of the propositions funds. It is estimated that over the next three years, the MHSA is ex-

pected to provide \$2.1 billion for mental health funding. The commission is chaired by former Assemblymember Darrell Steinberg (D-Sacramento), one of the principal proponents of Proposition 63.

The following morning, October 26, Assemblymember Ridley-Thomas and the Commissioners set out on a second bus tour through Downtown and South Los Angeles to gain input from homeless and formerly homeless persons, service providers and housing model experts, to identify potential housing solutions. The tour focused on supportive programs for homeless mentally ill populations and/or those at risk of homelessness, which are currently living in the various housing options observed on the tour.

NOTE: On November 10, 2005 Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas attended the United Coalition East Prevention Projects symposium, The Toxic Playground: Growing Up in Skid Row. Their report can be found at www.socialmodel.com ■



Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas and the 48th Assembly District Empowerment Congress Present 'Empowering Ourselves Before Tragedy Occurs'

On October 22, 2005, Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas and the 48th Assembly District Empowerment Congress held a disaster preparedness workshop titled: 'Empowering Ourselves Before Tragedy Occurs'. Participants were able to learn disaster preparedness techniques which are essential during an emergency as well as

financial preparedness in time of disaster. Participants included the Stentorians Los Angeles County Black Firefighters, the Los Angeles City Fire Department, the Los Angeles County Fire Department, the Southern California Earthquake Center and the California Society of CPA's. ■



Melvin Moultry, CPA and Los Angeles City Firefighters Vincent Owens and Aaron Walker listen intently during the Disaster Preparedness workshop.